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AUTHOR Kohn, Martin
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I program was to provide supplementary remedial instruction in reading and arithmetic to handicapped pupils. One hundred forty-eight emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired, and 138 severely learning disabled Title I eligible handicapped children were selected for participation. Since the children were attending non-graded classes, ages ranged from six to 14 years. Eighty-four percent of the students were boys. All of the participating children were performing poorly in school. Supplementary remedial instruction was provided individually and/or in small groups two or more times a week by a Title I teacher assigned to the school. The program model was diagnostic-prescriptive. The evaluation found that improvement in ability to read, as measured by the difference between predicted post-test scores and actual post-test scores, was four and one-half months; in arithmetic, the gain was seven months. An explanation for these outstanding gains was the diagnostic-prescriptive approach which was used to provide each child with the kind of remediation best suited to his needs. (Author/JM)

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ED138662

EVALUATION REPORT

Function # 09-58615

DIAGNOSTIC AND PRESCRIPTIVE PROGRAM IN READING AND MATHEMATICS FOR 300 TITLE I ELIGIBLE HANDICAPPED PUPILS

February-June 1975

Prepared by:

MARTIN KOHN, Ph.D.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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UD0 16841

An evaluation of a New York City School district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10) performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1974-75 school year.

Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, Director

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION
110 LIVINGSTON STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y. 11201

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Chapter I: THE PROGRAM

Subjects

Title I eligible handicapped pupils were selected from those presently enrolled in tax-based special education classes, non-graded, as follows:

148 Emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired children, chosen from 6 sites

138 Severely learning disabled children, chosen from 5 sites

for a total enrollment of 286 children.[1]

Since the children were attending non-graded classes, there was a wide range of age levels, from 6 to 14 years; if they had been placed in grades corresponding to their age, grade levels would have ranged from first to eighth grade. All of the children came from "impact" or disadvantaged schools, that is, from schools located in Title I areas or from disadvantaged home backgrounds.

Most of the subjects were boys (84%); the small percentage of girls is no doubt due to the lower prevalence of neurological disorders and learning disabilities among girls than among boys.

All of the children in the program were performing poorly in school. The subjects had initially become candidates for special education classes on the basis of recommendations by teachers and guidance counselors, achievement test results and classroom performance relative to other students in the grade level.

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[1] The program called for a total of 300 children but fell short of this goal by 14 pupils.

Children who become candidates for special education classes are derived from two groups: emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired (NI-EH) and severely learning disabled children. They undergo extensive screening and testing procedures by diagnostic units of the Board of Education of the City of New York.

In the case of the NI-EH children, the more or less informal procedure is followed up by a comprehensive evaluation carried out by the Evaluation and Placement Unit of the Board of Education. The standard operating procedure consists of direct observation of classroom functioning and a comprehensive battery of diagnostic procedures. If the results of the evaluation warrant it, the E&P recommends the child for placement in a special education class. The Unit issues a report which details the pupil's strengths and weaknesses and makes recommendations with regard to the specific areas in need of remediation (for example, attention span, short-term memory, auditory-visual coordination, etc.).

In the case of children with a severe learning disability, the same procedure is generally followed, that is, referral to the Evaluation and Placement Unit where, if the findings warrant it, the student is recommended for placement in a special education class and a report detailing strengths, weaknesses and aspects of functioning requiring special training is prepared. Among children with a severe learning disability, there may be brain-injured or retarded children. Brain-injured children are referred to the Bureau of Education for the Physically Handicapped which makes the decision as to placement in a tax-levy special education class. Retarded children are tested by the Bureau of Child Guidance and if they have an IQ below 75, they are assigned

to a tax-levy CRMD class.

All of the children in this program were enrolled in one of the special education classes located in 11 schools in four boroughs (Manhattan, Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens). Those Title I eligible children who were thought by their special education teachers to be most in need of remediation and most likely to benefit from remediation were selected to participate in the program. In each school the special education classes had been set up to serve a wide geographic area and all of the pupils were bused to the schools.

Program Objective and Methods

The target pupils were studying basic reading and arithmetic in their regular special education classes. The purpose of the program was to provide supplementary remedial instruction to enable the children to achieve a higher level of mastery in reading and arithmetic.

The supplementary remedial instruction was provided individually and/or in small groups two or more times per week by a Title I teacher assigned to the school. The program model that guided the Title I teacher was the diagnostic-prescriptive approach. At each of the sites, the Title I teacher made a comprehensive evaluation of each student based on previous diagnostic procedures and recommendations, her own observation of the pupil in the classroom, consultation with the tax-levy teachers and any other procedures which she deemed necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the child's problems. She then developed a series of goals for each student and selected remedial and training procedures best suited to improve the

student's reading and arithmetic skills. The prescriptive program was geared to the individual child's strengths and weaknesses. The Title I teacher's diagnosis of the pupil's problems and the enactment of the remedial program were frequently discussed with the Teacher Trainer assigned to her.

Each child worked with his own folder of material. The Title I teacher recorded, after each session, what intermediary goals had been met, what new problems had arisen and what other areas were in need of special attention.

The teachers were very innovative, highly flexible and highly motivated to provide the kind of instructional material best suited to help each child and motivate him or her to learn. All of the teachers provided a great deal of incentive and encouragement during the learning sessions and many of them gave concrete rewards (stars, candy, etc.) at the end of the sessions. My observation of individual and small group sessions indicated that, in spite of their severe learning handicaps, the children were highly motivated to learn and eager to come to the learning sessions.

Duration of Program

The program was in effect during the second term of the 1974-75 school year, that is, from February through June 1975.

Chapter II: EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluation Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the impact of a program using the diagnostic-prescriptive approach on children's reading and arithmetic skills by determining:

(1) the extent to which the participants demonstrated statistically significant improvement in reading and arithmetic achievement; and

(2) whether the reading and arithmetic grades of the students showed a statistically significant difference between the actual post-test score and the anticipated post-test score.

Data Collection

The instrument used for the evaluation was the Wide Range Achievement Test administered close to the onset of the program (pretest) and repeated again shortly before termination of the program (post-test). To evaluate gain in reading ability, the Reading subtest of the WRAT was administered; to assess improvement in arithmetic skills, the Arithmetic subtest of the WRAT was administered. There was some variation in the dates the pretests were given; on average, they were given around March 1, 1975. The post-tests were carried out during the last two weeks of May 1975. The pre- and post-tests were administered by the Title I teacher.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed by the Historical Regression Method. Briefly stated, the pretest scores were analyzed to determine

the average rate at which each pupil made progress in school prior to his enrollment in the Title I Special Education program. Comparison of post-test scores with pretest scores, adjusted for duration of program, enabled us to ascertain whether, on average, after enrollment in Title I, the children progressed at a significantly greater rate than expected on the basis of their previous rate of learning.

Limitations

The original design called for a total of 300 children to be served in this program. Slightly fewer than that number, N=286, actually participated. However, 21 children (17 from P.S. 226K) came into the program so late (end of April or early May) that no meaningful pretest/post-test evaluation could be made. Most of these children had been signed up for the program earlier but there was considerable delay in arranging bus transportation for them.

For eight of the remaining 265 children, post-test data were not obtained for the following reasons:

Hospitalized:	1
Suspended from school:	1
Excessive absence from school:	4
Moved away:	1
Dropped out of school:	1
	8

In addition, on the Reading subtest there were two children and on the Arithmetic subtest there were three children whose pre- and post-test scores were so low (below grade 1) that the historical regression procedure could not be applied. Thus,

pre- and post-test scores were available for a total of 255 children on the Reading subtest and 254 children on the Arithmetic subtest of the WRAT.

Late funding imposed limitations on the evaluation procedures:

(1) As noted above, for 21 children bus transportation could not be arranged with sufficient speed.

(2) Late funding also was a factor in later-than-desirable starts at a number of the sites, thus limiting the length of time in which the remedial program was operating. In a strict sense, this is taken into account in the historical regression concept; nevertheless, it needs to be kept in mind that it takes a teacher some time to become acquainted with a new site and the children; it takes time to carry out the assessment and diagnostic procedures that are necessary to set up individualized programs. In programs of short duration, this cuts heavily into the amount of time available for remediation.

Chapter III: FINDINGS

To assess the extent to which the children demonstrated improvement in their reading and arithmetic skills and to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between the actual post-test score and the anticipated post-test score, three analyses were undertaken: in the first analysis, the scores of all children were examined; in the second analysis, data were examined separately for the emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired children and the severely learning disabled children; in the third analysis, the scores of all students were broken down by grade level.

Results

Data For All Participants. The findings are presented in Table 1 on page 9. It may be seen in Part A of Table 1 that at time of pretest the children's reading level was slightly above second grade (2 years 2 months); their post-test level was 2 years 7 months. The gain from pretest to post-test was statistically highly significant ($t=14.56$, $p \leq .001$). Even more importantly, the actual post-test score exceeded the predicted score (which was based on the children's average rate of progress in the course of their previous education) by .45, that is, by almost half a year of achievement. This difference was also statistically highly significant ($t=12.25$, $p \leq .001$). In other words, in one semester the students learned almost a semester's work over and above what would have been expected on the basis of their school performance in the past.

The arithmetic scores appear in Part B of Table 1. The

TABLE 1

PRETEST, POST-TEST AND GAIN SCORES ON THE WRAT READING AND ARITHMETIC SUBTESTS (All Participants)

	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Part A: Reading (N=255)			
Pretest	2.18	1.07	
Post-test	2.71	1.34	
Predicted post-test	2.27	1.14	
Gain from pretest to post-test	.54	.59	14.56***
Gain from predicted post-test to actual post-test	.45	.59	12.25***
Part B: Arithmetic (N=254)			
Pretest	2.68	1.04	
Post-test	3.50	1.12	
Predicted post-test	2.81	1.08	
Gain from pretest to post-test	.82	.82	16.06***
Gain from predicted post-test to actual post-test	.71	.84	13.41***

*** $p \leq .001$

children were somewhat more advanced in arithmetic than in reading at the beginning of the program and they made even larger gains in arithmetic than in reading. At time of pretest the students were performing at grade level 2.7 and shortly before termination of the program they were performing midway between the third and fourth grade (grade level 3.5). The gain of .82 (or eight months) was highly significant ($t=16.06$, $p \leq .001$). Even more importantly, the gain exceeded the expected gain by .71 (or seven months) and this difference was also highly significant ($t=13.41$, $p \leq .001$). Thus, in one semester the children advanced the equivalent of almost three-fourths of a school year beyond what was predicted on the basis of their past rate of progress in school.

Data Examined Separately By Group. To ascertain whether the improvement occurred primarily among the emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired children or among the severely learning disabled children or whether both groups made equal gains, the data were analyzed separately for each group. The results are given in Table 2 on page 11. It is evident from the last line in Part A of Table 2 that, for both groups, the improvement in the ability to read was greater than expected at the .001 level ($t=6.97$, $p \leq .001$ for the emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired; $t=11.52$, $p \leq .001$ for the severely learning disabled).

Similarly, the differences between the predicted and actual post-test scores in arithmetic, shown in the bottom line of Part B of Table 2, were of the same high statistical significance in both groups ($t=8.14$, $p \leq .001$ for emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired and $t=10.83$, $p \leq .001$ for the severely

TABLE 2

PRETEST, POST-TEST AND GAIN SCORES ON THE WRAT READING AND ARITHMETIC SUBTESTS
(Separately By Group)

	Emot. handicapped-neurolog. impaired			Severely learning disabled		
	Mean	S.D.	t-value	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Part A: Reading						
Pretest	2.17	1.09		2.18	1.05	
Post-test	2.72	1.39		2.70	1.29	
Predicted post-test	2.30	1.20		2.25	1.10	
Gain from pretest to post-test	.56	.70	8.87***	.52	.47	12.73***
Gain from predicted post-test to actual post-test	.45	.71	6.97***	.46	.46	11.52***
Part B: Arithmetic						
Pretest	2.56	.98		2.78	1.09	
Post-test	3.30	1.11		3.70	1.10	
Predicted post-test	2.74	1.02		2.87	1.13	
Gain from pretest to post-test	.72	.76	10.52***	.91	.86	12.25***
Gain from predicted post-test to actual post-test	.58	.78	8.14***	.82	.88	10.83***

Note. For emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired children, N=122 for Reading scores, N=121 for Arithmetic scores; for severely learning disabled children, N=133.

*** $p \leq .001$

learning disabled children).

These results rule out the possibility that the remarkable gains made by the children as a whole were primarily due to one of the two groups.

Data Examined By Grade Level. To determine whether the improvement was attributable to a small number of children who, at one or another grade level, made extraordinary progress or whether the gains were evenly distributed across grade levels, the orderliness of change was analyzed. In Table 3 on page 13 the extent to which the actual post-test score surpassed the predicted post-test score is shown for each grade, from second through eighth. (As noted earlier, the children were in non-graded classes. Grade level designations correspond to age levels and represent the grade in which the pupils would have been enrolled if their school progress had been at a normal rate.) It may be seen that the gains both in reading and arithmetic showed up consistently at each grade level and that all but one of the fourteen differences examined were statistically significant. The exception was second grade reading.

These findings rule out the possibility that the remarkable gains demonstrated by the children as a whole were due to the rapid advancement of a small number of students.

Adequacy of Facilities and Materials

Both the facilities and the materials were adequate for carrying out the objective of the program. In the first few weeks the teachers in several schools had to work in makeshift areas (for example, corner of the library) but in a relatively short time they all had separate rooms in which they could

TABLE 3

DIFFERENCES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PREDICTED POST-TEST SCORES AND ACTUAL POST-TEST SCORES IN READING AND ARITHMETIC BY GRADE LEVEL

Grade Level[1]	N	Reading			Arithmetic		
		Mean diff.	S.D.	t-value	Mean diff.	S.D.	t-value
2nd grade	21	.13	.31	1.92	.61	.70	4.02***
3rd grade	24	.31	.44	3.51**	.54	.76	3.52**
4th grade	46	.37	.51	4.87***	.84	.91	6.27***
5th grade[2]	50	.59	.64	6.42***	.77	.92	5.85***
6th grade	45	.42	.64	4.49***	.69	.82	5.65***
7th grade	55	.57	.66	6.44***	.63	.80	5.77***
8th grade	14	.60	.51	4.37***	.84	.91	3.46*

[1] The children were in non-graded classes. Grade level designations correspond to age levels and represent the grade in which the students would have been enrolled if their school progress had been at a normal rate.

[2] In 5th grade, N=49 for Arithmetic scores.

* $p \leq .004$
** $p \leq .002$
*** $p \leq .001$

instruct the children individually or in small groups.

The ampleness of materials varied greatly from one school to the next; however, in no school was there the kind of shortage that would have prevented the teachers from pursuing their goals.

Probably the most important aspect of the entire program was the enthusiasm and innovativeness of the teachers. They considered the work challenging and were eager to bring out the best in the children; they improvised and produced the kind of learning materials which they felt were most suitable for a specific child or for groups of children.

Another important aspect of the program was the fact that the teachers were allowed to function relatively autonomously with the particular diagnostic-prescriptive approach they deemed appropriate for a child. They consulted with the teachers in the special education classes, they discussed the remedial program and the children with the Teacher Trainer and they benefited greatly from these contacts, but in the final analysis they were free to operate without interference. This was a big plus in the teachers' motivation and in the outcome of the program.

Discrepancy Analysis

The diagnostic-prescriptive approach described in the proposal was carried out and no major discrepancy between the goals and their implementation was noted. There is little doubt that, with regard to the objectives, the needs of the target population were served.

Chapter IV: SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results presented in Chapter III indicate that both emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired children and severely learning disabled children profited from the diagnostic-prescriptive approach of the present program. Both groups made statistically significant greater gains in both reading and arithmetic than would have been anticipated from their rate of learning prior to entering the program. The findings showed that the large gains were not due to a few exceptional children but were relatively evenly spread across the age range (6 to 14). Since the program was so successful, no recommendations for changes are made.

Suggestions

(1) Many of the children in this program can function successfully in a one-to-one situation with a special teacher but present difficulties in the classroom situation. It is plausible to assume that some of the children, after a series of successful experiences with a Title I teacher, may be able to function more adequately in the classroom setting.

To assess this aspect of the program, it would be useful to develop a behavior rating instrument on which both the Title I and the classroom teachers would rate the student's classroom behavior, both at the beginning of the program and at its termination.

(2) The Title I teachers were so innovative and enthusiastic about the program that I think it would be useful to bring them

together in a meeting about once a month so that they could share their insights, techniques and experiences with one another. Although the Teacher Trainer fulfils this purpose to some extent, the direct one-to-one contacts among the teachers would lead to increased communication and heightened sense of participation.

Recommendations

The findings suggest that the program was extremely successful in meeting its objective, namely, to enable emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired and severely learning disabled children to achieve a higher level of mastery in reading and arithmetic.

It is therefore recommended that the program be continued.

Chapter V: EXEMPLARY PROGRAM ABSTRACT

Component Code	Activity Code	Objective Code
60861	715	801
60961	715	801

The program was a diagnostic-prescriptive approach designed to enhance the reading and arithmetic achievement of emotionally handicapped-neurologically impaired and severely learning disabled children. The students were seen individually or in small groups two or more times per week by a Title I teacher. A total of 286 children participated in the program which was in operation during the spring semester of the school year 1974-75.

Improvement in ability to read, as measured by the difference between predicted post-test scores and actual post-test scores, was .45 (or 4½ months); in arithmetic, the gain score was .71 (or 7 months). Both gains were statistically highly significant ($p \leq .001$). In both components the students progressed, on average, at the rate of more than one month of achievement gain per calendar month of program activity beyond the anticipated improvement based on their rate of learning prior to enrollment in the program.

The reasons for these outstanding gains are: the diagnostic-prescriptive approach gave the teachers the opportunity and freedom to provide each child with the kind of remediation best suited to his or her particular problems. The teachers were highly motivated and they appeared eager to do as much for the children as possible within the relatively short time span of one semester.

APPENDICES

Program Title: Diagnostic and Prescriptive Program in Reading and Mathematics for 300 Title I Eligible Handicapped Pupils

Function # 09-58615

Use Table 30A. for Historical Regression Design (6-Step Formula) for Reading (English); Math (English); Reading (Non-English); Math (Non-English).

30A. Standardized Test Results.

In the Table below, enter the requested information about the tests used to evaluate the effectiveness of major project components/activities in achieving desired objectives. This form requires means obtained from scores in the form of grade equivalent units as processed by the 6 step formula (see District Evaluator's Handbook of Selected Evaluation Procedures, p. 45-49). Before completing this table, read all footnotes. Attach additional sheets if necessary. [49]

	Component Code					Activity Code			Test Used[1]	Form		Level		Total N[2]	Group I.D.[3]	Number Tested[4]	Pretest		Predicted Posttest Mean	Actual Posttest		Statistical Data	
										Pre	Post	Pre	Post				Date	Mean		Date	Mean	Obtained Value of t	Level[5] of significance
dg.	6	0	8	6	1	7	1	5	WRAT -65	see Note below		I	I	286	61	255	3/75	2.18	2.27	5/75	2.71	12.25	$p \leq .001$
r.	6	0	9	6	1	7	1	5	WRAT -65			I	I	286	61	254	3/75	2.68	2.81	5/75	3.50	13.41	$p \leq .001$

1/ Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-58, CAT-70, etc.).
2/ Total number of participants in the activity.
3/ Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 5). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
4/ Total number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations.
5/ Specify level of statistical significance obtained (e.g., $p \leq .05$; $p \leq .01$).

Note. No alternate forms available on this test.

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION - DATA LOSS FORM

(attach to MIR, item #30) Function # 09-58615

In this table enter all Data Loss information. Between MIR, item #30 and this form, all participants in each activity must be accounted for. The component and activity codes used in completion of item #30 should be used here so that the two tables match. See definitions below table for further instructions.

Component Code	Activity Code	(1) Group I.D.	(2) Test Used	(3) Total N	(4) Number Tested/ Analyzed	(5) Participants Not Tested/ Analyzed		(6) Reasons why students were not tested, or if tested, were not analyzed	
						N	%		Number/ Reason
6 0 8 6 1	7 1 5	61	WRAT -65	286	255	29	10%	Students entered the program too late to apply meaningful pre/post-test measurements (most from P.S. 226K)	21
6 0 9 6 1	7 1 5	61	WRAT -65	286	254*	30	10%	No post-test:	
								Hospitalized	1
								Suspended from school	1
								Excessive absences	4
								Moved away	1
								Dropped out of school	1

(1) Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 9). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
(2) Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-70, SDAT-74, etc.).
(3) Number of participants in the activity.
(4) Number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations found on item #30.
(5) Number and percent of participants not tested and/or not analyzed on item #30.
(6) Specify all reasons why students were not tested and/or analyzed. For each reason specified, provide a separate number count. If any further documentation is available, please attach to this form. If further space is needed to specify and explain data loss, attach additional pages to this form.

* Reasons listed under column 6 apply to both the reading and arithmetic components. For 1 additional child no valid arithmetic post-test was provided.

3/75